



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## **SPECIAL VALUES IN PARKER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE: ALUMNI IMPRESSIONS.**

---

NOTE: We hesitate to print these two articles from two school alumni, one of whom was graduated in 1910, the other in 1917. A few months ago we asked each graduate for a letter answering the following questions:

1. Do you consider that anything in your experience at Parker was especially conducive to training in good citizenship?
2. If so, what, in particular, has proven useful to you as a member of a larger community?

Many of the letters received in reply mentioned features of school life which illustrate the subject of this volume. We have chosen two for printing here. While almost all of the replies emphasized the points brought out in those two letters, their authors were not all so optimistic. Several told of difficulties they had encountered because of the failure to realize during their school experience the need of absolute accuracy in all their work. Others said that in our freedom there was not enough strong guidance. They have made us realize many of our inadequacies; they have made us take stock of our practice in relation to our theory. Moreover, we are of course aware of the fact that much of the rare quality in certain young people who have gone through our school is inherent, and not the product of organized education.

In printing these two letters, therefore, we protest that we are not saying, "See what we have done!" We are simply giving the impression of two sincere critics of the school who know it well because they have spent many years in it. The vividness of certain experiences has stayed with them. Certain habits of thought have grown up in them. Their statements may give to the reader a new viewpoint upon some of the work which we have tried to make clear in this book, and which is after all better experienced than talked about.

### **SELF-COMMAND**

Training in self-command, in my opinion, is what the Parker School most richly contributes to its pupils and to their power of being good citizens. I do not mean merely self-control, for that is essentially negative: I mean self-command in doing, even more than in not doing. Such self-command includes the power to see what ought to be done, to devise the means of doing, and to have the force, courage, and persistence to do and to continue to do until the end is accomplished. Such self-command is not only a moral quality, it is also intellectual.

Training that develops self-command is so subtle that it is difficult to explain the means by which the Parker School accomplished it. We were taught to see the value of our study and to make ourselves study without being compelled. In every matter of discipline we were not made to do or not to do; we were brought to see the wisdom or the rightness of doing or not doing and to command ourselves to do or not to do. Thus we were helped to want whatever was right, to think out for ourselves what the right was, and to be able to bring ourselves to live up to our own thinking. We were not even told explicitly what to do or how to do it, in our work or in our play. In a history course, I remember being allowed to choose the subject of most interest to me to write a long theme upon, and having chosen "The Nautical Instruments of Columbus," I asked where to read about them and how to get the material together. I was given the teacher's library card and told that I could probably find what I wanted at the Public Library. The rest I was left to work out for myself. We were not given short lessons from a textbook which we could almost memorize, but we were given the opportunity of discriminating between the important and the unimportant material. In physics we performed experiments before reading in the textbook the principles to be illustrated. In manual training we were not given a set series of plant labels, blotter pads, broad swords, etc., to make, but we were left to design our own manufactures. Even when we undertook to build boats and automobiles the teacher did not discourage us, though he admitted at the start that he knew little about them and knew of no place in which to build them. Though possibly we did not learn as many facts as pupils in other schools, or pass such high examinations, we did learn how to find out facts, how to discover and use opportunities, how to act on our own responsibility.

In college, when given subjects for theses with the library before us and no other assistance to be had, when conducting experiments in special fields where the way was not mapped out; in law school, where cases and not textbooks are given, and where examination questions do not relate to settled rules or principles; in business or professions, where nearly every contingency that arises brings problems that have never been fully solved before; in all these, it is not so much accumulated knowledge that counts, as the ability to know how to work things out from the sources on the known principles, or somehow to feel them out from the facts themselves.

If one can thus work things out and has learned to like to do so, his education in schools is just a beginning for the education of life. Each new experience will add to his sum of knowledge, and in the end his accumulated knowledge will be larger than that of people who learned more facts at school but did not learn so fully either how to learn or the joy of learning. More than mere ability, the methods of the Parker School give the power and the habit of choosing for oneself to do the right, of determining what that right is. This alone makes ability and the possession of knowledge of true value to the individual and to the community in which he lives.

#### POWER TO THINK AND TO ACT

It is the innumerable things I was allowed to work out for myself at Parker that have remained most vivid in my mind. For example: when I saw the mouth of the Mississippi River for the first time, I knew in what stage the delta was, what was happening to it, and what probably would happen to it, not because I had read about it in a book, but because I remembered just what happened to the delta I had built in the sand table in the fifth grade, and had watched and experimented with under all sorts of conditions.

Since my days in fourth grade, I have had an admiration for ancient Greece and her culture that I am certain I never could have received from the printed page alone. For weeks in fourth grade we dressed like Greeks and acted like Greeks; we even thought like Greeks. Socrates was a very real man to me, and the details of the Trojan war I followed with anxiety. We listened to the adventures of Odysseus with feverish excitement. In our modeling classes we made, for the decoration of our room, friezes which we designed in our art classes. I knew and loved every corner of the Parthenon. Going to the Art Institute and seeing statues of Athene and Hermes was like meeting old, respected friends.

My work in the clay room has not made a sculptress of me, but it has shown me the difficulties of the work and taught me to appreciate the work of others. Nor has my work in the art room made a great painter of me; yet this work, particularly our attempt at interpreting music by line and color, gave me an entirely new point of view about art. The hours spent in music have not given me a glorious voice, but they have taught me to love the best in music.